

3/7/12

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Barry William, and I'm here to ask you to please pass HB 5389, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA.

Until 2006, I was a lobbyist at the Connecticut General Assembly. I truly loved my work. At the end of the 2006 session, I realized that had to stop because of the effects of my Parkinson's disease. Since my diagnosis in 2004, my world has grown smaller and smaller. It takes me an hour to get dressed every morning trying to figure out a new way to pull my pants on, and I can't wear shirts with buttons. I can't do the normal things that other dads can do with -- with their sons. I can't play basketball, go through a museum or go to the beach. Many days I can't even make it into a car to go to a movie or a restaurant. Recently I've reached the stage where I'll be shuffling along and I lose my balance and fall for no reason. When friends ask what happened, what'd you fall on, I just tell them it could a grain of sand. It's just there and I -- and I fall. When I come to a doorway or an open threshold crossing through it is like climbing Mount Everest. I haven't been able to sleep through the night for years because I can't move in bed. In recent months, I've had to sleep in a chair.

I tell you this not to complain. I realize how lucky I am just to wake up every morning, and there's always something to find joy in. When my symptoms started getting really bad and I felt really afraid of what the future was, the doctor told me a little secret. If I smoked some marijuana, there was a good chance I could feel symptom free for a while. I tried it. The doctor was right and for the first time in a long time I felt normal. Though it may not seem much to you but, to me, it means the world just to feel normal without the symptoms of the disease.

I ask you to please give me and others, like me, the chance to feel disease free and normal. I ask you to please pass Senate Bill 1015. Thank you very much.